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CIA Reportedly Aided Militias In Lebanon

The Central Intelligence Agency began secretly supporting the Christian militias in Lebanon last year to keep them from falling completely under Israeli influence. The evidence is contained in a startling top-secret memo dated March 6, 1981.

This document correctly forewarned fully 15 months in advance that Israel would invade Lebanon, that the Palestinians would be routed, that the Christian Phalangists would emerge as the dominant Lebanese faction and, therefore, that the United States would "forfeit all influence" in Lebanon unless "military and financial assistance" was funneled to the Phalangists.

Up to that time, it had been U.S. policy to bolster the Lebanese government.

But the government was held together by a delicate political and religious balance, which had "disintegrated," the memo declared.

"Since the establishment of a PLO state within a state in the 1970-73 period and the subsequently massive inflow of arms to both Christian and Moslem communities," reported the memo, "the government of Lebanon

has been unable to exercise its authority throughout the country."

The CIA not only saw "no prospect of improvement," but also anticipated that the Israelis would lose patience with the Palestinians and come crashing across the border to deal with them.

"Further Israeli incursions, if not imminent, are nevertheless inevitable," the memo predicted. "The question is not so much whether or when such incursions will occur but the scope and purpose of such incursions, and their potential for igniting a wider and more dangerous confrontation."

A large-scale invasion, warned the memo, "might seek to link with the Israeli-supplied Christian militias to the north, redrawing the political map of Lebanon."

The CIA decided, therefore, to wean the Phalangist militias from the Israelis. "It is concluded," stated the top-secret memo, "that the agency should provide military and financial assistance, as requested, to the Phalangist militias."

"Should these militias remain solely dependent on Israeli support," the memo argued, "the U.S. will forfeit all influence in a post-incursion environment, with the likely resulting suppression of the Moslem communities and expulsion of the Palestinians."

The CIA strategy has been so successful that Lebanon may now wind up as a U.S. protectorate.

There has also been a corresponding breakdown in the historic cooperation between the United States and Israel.

Kicking Cripples: When a shortage of space developed at the Agriculture Department's parking lot in downtown Washington last summer, none of the agency's 130 bigshots lost his spot. But 11 handicapped employees did.

One of those who got kicked out on the street was Warren Tilghman, a 44-year-old special-projects officer. He has severe back problems, two discs removed and a third ruptured.

In May, his condition was aggravated when he slipped and fell in an Agriculture building, since then he has been able to work only half-days.

Tilghman appealed the ruling that deprived him of the reserved parking privilege he has had since he joined the department in 1979.

In July, a Veterans Administration doctor certified that Tilghman is a "40 percent service-connected disabled veteran," and recommended that he be allowed to keep his parking place.

An Agriculture spokesman told my reporter Allan Lengel that a department doctor had reviewed all the handicapped cases and concluded that Tilghman and 10 other employees no longer deserved special treatment.

The spokesman declined to comment further on grounds that Tilghman's appeal is pending.